

What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

RTV & Nagorik TV

Bangamata U-19 Women's Int'l Gold Cup

Mongolia v Laos

Live from 6:00pm

Star Sports Select 1

Indian Premier League

Kolkata v Rajasthan

Live from 8:30pm

Ten 2

La Liga

Getafe v Real Madrid

Live from 1:30am (Friday)

Bangamata U-19 Women's Int'l Gold Cup

Mongolia v Laos

Time: 6:00pm

Venue: BNS, Dhaka

Sunday to miss Chennaiyin tie?

SPORTS REPORTER

Six-time professional league champions Abahani expressed their frustration after the club's Nigerian striker Sunday Chizoba failed to obtain Indian visa ahead of their AFC Cup match against Chennaiyin FC which will be held in Ahmedabad on April 30.

"It is frustrating that we can't go to India with a full-strength side while the home side will play with full strength including four foreign players," said Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu. "Indian High Commission told us that Sunday has to take Indian visa from Nigeria after refusing to accept his passport a week ago."

"According to the bylaws of the tournament, respective national football association will ensure visas of visiting sides and the AFC instructed All Indian Football Federation [AIFF] to take necessary steps in this regard. However, today (Wednesday) the AIFF expressed its inability to arrange visa for Sunday," the former national footballer said. "Sunday travelled to India twice with Abahani during the last edition of the AFC Cup last year and he also played in the I-league previously. How is it possible for a player to go to his home country which is far from Bangladesh and collect visa giving up on training in a short span of time? Considering everything, we will request the Indian High Commission to arrange for Sunday's visa."

Sunday is one of Abahani's key strikers who scored one of the two goals in a 2-2 draw against another Indian outfit Minerva Punjab in Dhaka earlier this month. Abahani and Chennaiyin FC have four points each in the four-team group even though the Indian side lead the table due to a superior goal-difference. The match is crucial for the Sky Blues in their bid to staying in the qualifying race for the second round.

Abahani are scheduled to fly to India on April 27.

RCB stay alive

STAR SPORT DESK

An unbeaten 44-ball 82 from AB de Villiers guided Royal Challengers Bangalore to a 17-run victory over Kings XI Punjab and kept them alive in the Indian Premier League in Bangalore yesterday. The De Villiers effort helped Virat Kohli's men post 202 for 4 in 20 overs and their bowlers defended the total, thanks to a late wobble from the Punjab batters.

SCORES IN BRIEF
RCB: 202 for 4 (De Villiers 82 not out, Stoinis 46 not out, Patel 43; Ashwin 1-15)
Kings XI: 185 for 7 (Rahul 42, Pooran 46; Yadav 3-36)
Result: RCB won by 17 runs.

Final deferred to May 4

SPORTS REPORTER

The final match of the Bangamata U-19 Women's International Gold Cup has been deferred by a day to May 4, a high-placed official of the Bangladesh Football Federation informed yesterday. The match will kick off at 6:00pm at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

"The final match will be held on May 4 instead of May 3 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be our chief guest of the final, and to make sure of her presence, we have deferred the final by a day," BFF's general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, the last match of the group stage, which was scheduled to kick off at 6:00pm on April 27, will be held on the same day at 8:30pm to accommodate the final match of the football event of Bangabandhu Inter University Sports Champs 2019, which will be held at the same venue earlier in the day. The Prime Minister is expected to be present at that event which is being organised by the Ministry of Youth and Sports.



Kyrgyzstan players get into a group huddle after ensuring their semifinal berth in the Bangamata U-19 Women's International Gold Cup with a 2-1 win over United Arab Emirates at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan thru'

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite a second-half scare, Kyrgyzstan advanced to the semifinals of the Bangamata U-19 Women's International Gold Cup with a hard-fought 2-1 win over United Arab Emirates (UAE) in their Group B encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The outcome also ensured semifinal berth for hosts Bangladesh, who will face Kyrgyzstan tomorrow to decide Group B winners while UAE, with two consecutive defeats, were eliminated from the group stage.

Smarting from a 2-0 defeat against Bangladesh, UAE were eager to bounce back in the tournament but two miserable fumbles from goalkeeper Aya Walid Malalla and a missed spot-kick forced UAE to accept a 2-1 defeat, identical to last year's AFC U-19 Women's Championship Qualifiers against the same opposition.

Both sides played attacking football and created some good chances but Kyrgyzstan had the last laugh after UAE's substitute Sendya

UAE	1 - 2	Kyrgyzstan
Alzarkan 39'		Aizhan 6' Kenzhebulu 18'

Gharib missed a spot-kick in the 70th minute to squander an opportunity to equalise.

Even though the UAE goalkeeper though thwarted Saskeeva Aiperi from a one-on-one situation in the fifth minute, she failed to stop Boronbekova Aizhan's corner-kick from embracing the net in the next minute.

Malalla then made another unforgettable fumble in the 18th minute to concede the second goal as she failed to grip a Toktobolotova Banktygul corner, allowing unmarked Kyzy Kenzhebulu headed home from close range.

Despite going down 2-0, UAE showed character to pull one back in the 39th minute as Shahid Alzarkan converted a spot-kick after Kellishova Baiana handled the ball inside the danger zone.

UAE came close to equalising the margin

in the 41st minute but Sara Sameeh Alblooshi missed the target despite getting Kyrgyzstan goalkeeper Tolonova Aichurek alone.

After resumption, Shahid Alzarkan saw her close-range shot blocked by a Kyrgyz defender while Sendya Gharib floated over the crossbar from the spot after referee Wang Chien awarded a penalty following a foul on Sara Shameeh inside the danger zone.

Kyrgyzstan were reduced to 10 players after Boronbekova Aizhan was sent off with three minutes remaining, but the Central Asians negotiated the rest of time to leave the field with a valuable victory.

"We have come here with good preparation and the girls put up a good show in front of a small group of our fans," Kyrgyzstan coach Natalia Gaivornoskaia said, adding that the red card to Boronbekova would be great loss for them in the Bangladesh match.

"We played well but there was lack of experience. We were very unlucky to lose the match because we could have drawn had we not squandered the penalty," said UAE coach Houriya Al Taheri.

SHORT CORNER

USA, Oman bag ODI status

USA bagged the ODI status for the first time in their cricketing history as they defeated Hong Kong by 84 runs in the World Cricket League Division 2 match in Windhoek on Wednesday.

Oman, who had three wins in their first three games, were also awarded the ODI status.

The win was USA's third in the tournament, in four games, and ensured they will finish in the top four in the table. The top four teams from Papua New Guinea, Hong Kong, Namibia, Canada, Oman and USA will join Scotland, the UAE and Nepal in Cricket World Cup League 2.

FA Cup winners to be served non-alcoholic champagne

The winners of next month's FA Cup final between Manchester City and Watford will for the first time celebrate with non-alcoholic champagne to accommodate those who do not drink.

The FA said in a statement that they had taken note of those players who do not drink for religious reasons, are tee-total or too young to consume alcohol.

"Winning teams will be awarded with non-alcoholic 'champagne' for their celebrations in all FA competitions, starting from this year's FA Cup Final," read a statement cited by Sky Sports.

"This is to ensure that we are as inclusive as possible to players and communities who may be prohibited from alcohol, as well as any players who are under 18."

Spanish court acquits Rosell

A Spanish court on Wednesday acquitted former Barcelona president Sandro Rosell, who spent nearly two years in pre-trial custody, for money laundering.

Rosell, his wife and four others, were accused of "large-scale money laundering" of close to 20 million euros (\$23 million) since 2006, relating to television rights and sponsorship deals in Brazil.

The National Court, which handles major criminal cases, said it had acquitted all six accused because "after evaluating the evidence presented during the

trial, the accusations were not proven".

"As such, given the doubts that were raised, the principle of 'in dubio pro reo' must apply," said the court, using the Latin for 'when in doubt favour the accused', referring to the presumption of innocence.

--AFP

Liverpool reveal pre-season tour to United States

Premier League title contenders Liverpool will head to the United States for their pre-season tour ahead of the 2019-20 campaign, the club announced on Tuesday.

Liverpool, currently leading the Premier League by two points, have announced three friendlies in the US to fine-tune their preparations for next season.

The Reds will take on manager Jurgen Klopp's former club Borussia Dortmund in the first competitive soccer match in the University of Notre Dame's 77,000-capacity stadium in Indiana, on July 19.

Liverpool then fly to Boston where they will play Sevilla on July 21 at Fenway Park -- home of the Boston Red Sox, the other prized asset in Liverpool owners Fenway Sports Group's portfolio.

Their final match of the tour is against Sporting Lisbon on July 24 at Yankee Stadium in New York.

--AFP

Long breaks fastest goal record

Southampton striker Shane Long scored the fastest goal in Premier League history on Tuesday after netting just 7.69 seconds into his side's 1-1 draw at Watford, who snatched a point thanks to Andre Gray's late equaliser.

Long's record-breaking goal came immediately after the kick-off when he blocked a clearance from Watford defender Craig Cathcart, allowing the Republic of Ireland international to dink a cool finish over Ben Foster.

The 32-year-old's effort surpassed the previous fastest Premier League goal, scored by Tottenham defender Ledley King in 9.9 seconds against Bradford in December 2000.

"It's a record, is it?" Long told Sky Sports News with a grin after the game. It's nice to have a record like that, but it would have been nicer if it was the winning goal."

--AFP



Barcelona striker Luis Suarez scores the second goal from a penalty during their La Liga encounter against Alaves at the Mendizorroza Stadium on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Barca edge closer to the title

AFP, Barcelona

Barcelona will win La Liga on Wednesday if Atletico Madrid lose to Valencia after a 2-0 victory over Alaves gave them a 12-point lead at the top of the table.

Lionel Messi started on the bench at Mendizorroza on Tuesday in a move that made clear just how comfortable Barca are in this title race, its conclusion surely now only a matter of when rather than if.

Should Atletico avoid defeat to Valencia at the Wanda Metropolitano, the Catalans will still be crowned champions on Saturday at the Camp Nou with a victory over Levante.

They could even have it wrapped up before kick-off on Saturday if Atletico fail to take at least four points from Valencia and Real Valladolid, the latter whom they face a few hours earlier on Saturday.

"It's an incredibly valuable win," coach Ernesto Valverde said. "In the end however much as people say the league is won, it has to be achieved on the field."

"We are at the gates now, needing three points more with four games ahead. It is an immense joy to be in this position after so many months of work."

Real Madrid, who play their game in hand against Getafe on Thursday, sit 16

points adrift in third. Alaves stay eighth, their hopes of a Europa League spot fading fast.

Messi came on as a substitute in the 61st minute shortly after his team had scored twice, Carles Alena guiding one into the corner before Luis Suarez, in Messi's absence, took and dispatched a penalty.

Valverde leaving out his captain and star player, presumably with an eye on next week's Champions League semi-final against Liverpool, was a luxury Barcelona have earned and can afford.

Liverpool, still jostling with Manchester City in the Premier League, are unlikely to feel the same sort of confidence when they face Huddersfield on Friday.

"The idea at half-time was to play Leo because the result was not clear," Valverde said.

"But regarding the Golden Boot and that sort of thing, we are only focused on what we have to do to win."

"Leo has a lot of individual challenges ahead but today it was time to rest."

Other players were preserved too. Jordi Alba, Clement Lenglet and Arthur Melo all began on the bench, allowing Samuel Umtiti more minutes as he recovers from a knee injury.

Eriksen keeps Spurs on course

AFP, London



Mauricio Pochettino admitted his tired Tottenham stars are pushing themselves to their limits after Christian Eriksen's superb late strike sealed a hard-fought 1-0 win over struggling Brighton on Tuesday.

Pochettino's third-placed side dominated from start to finish at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, but a combination of brave Brighton defending and poor finishing kept the match in the balance until the 88th minute.

Eriksen finally ended Brighton's stubborn resistance with a sensational long-range drive that lifted Tottenham three points clear of fourth-placed Chelsea and four ahead of Arsenal in fifth.

"The team are not as fresh as we wanted, not just legs, but minds, so we have to congratulate the players. I'm so proud of them," said Pochettino.

"Brighton were a really brave opponent. The most important thing is we believed, we didn't give up."

Although Arsenal can close the gap to one point if they win at Wolves on Wednesday, this was a vital result in Spurs' bid to qualify for next season's Champions League via a top four finish.

Tottenham have now won all four games in all competitions at their plush new arena, scoring eight goals without reply.

This was the most frustrating fixture at the £1 billion (\$1.3 billion) ground as the hosts looked hamstrung without injured striker Harry Kane until Eriksen came to the rescue with his ninth goal of the season in all competitions.

But Pochettino was delighted with the way his players kept plugging away right to the end despite the draining effects of their hectic fixture list.

"There were more than 20 attempts and the reward is massive," he said.

CAREER OPPORTUNITY FOR FIVE STAR HOTEL

Five Star Hotel Project looking for following Candidates:
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 - Must have 5-10 years experience in Hotel Industries with project management company, having Prince II certification is a plus.
 - Must be fluently conversant in English.
 - Must have minimum B.Sc. in Engineering degree in relevant subject.
- Interested candidates are invited to apply with complete Resume/Profile before 25th May 2019 to Iqbal Center (16th floor), 42 Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani C/A, Dhaka-1213.

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Mehedi Hasan Miraz (C) was officially announced as 'UNICEF Child Rights Advocate' during a press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday. Mehedi will work with UNICEF to promote child rights and create mass awareness in the areas of nutrition, health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene and child protection.

PHOTO: COLLECTED